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FUTENMA

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February 11, 2010

Hiroataka Yamaguchi in Saipan

Social Democratic Party (SDP) policy chief Tomoko Abe, People's New Party (PNP) policy chief Mikio Shimoji, and other ruling party officials visited Saipan in the U.S. territory of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on Feb. 10 and met with Governor Benigno Fitial. The governor expressed his willingness to accept the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) to the Northern Marianas. However, he also said that the U.S. government's approval will be required, so the realization of the relocation is expected to be difficult.

The meeting was open to reporters. Fitial said: "I would like to affirm our willingness to accept the military base as the consensus of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands. I think this will benefit the local people." He also said: "We cannot do anything

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without the U.S. government's assistance and support." He said at an interview after the meeting: "We are willing to take over all the functions of the Futenma base in the future." Shimoji also told reporters after the meeting: "We would like to call on the government to have the courage to negotiate with the U.S. government."

The Northern Marianas are located to the north of the U.S. territory of Guam, which the SDP cites as an option for Futenma's relocation. Unlike Guam, there are no U.S. military bases on the main island of Saipan, which only has an airport for civilian aircraft. A senior U.S. government official gave the following comments on Feb. 10: "The structure of U.S. forces is an issue of national security that should be decided by the government. The U.S. government continues to believe that the realignment road map is the best solution." On the other hand, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano stated at his news conference: "We have never considered this option. This is not included in the overall study." Even the PNP considers relocation to Saipan to be a possibility for the future, but it supports Futenma's integration with Kadena Air Base as the most promising relocation plan.

Abe and Shimoji later joined Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoriyhis Matsuno, who was visiting Guam. The three will visit U.S. military facilities in Guam on Feb. 11.

4) Guam governor rejects Futenma relocation

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
February 12, 2010

Hiroataka Yamaguchi in Guam

Felix Camacho, governor of the U.S. territory of Guam, met with senior officials of the Japanese government and ruling parties and expressed his rejection of the proposal to relocate the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) to Guam. He said: "It would exceed our capacity to host U.S. forces, and it would be difficult for us to take on more military bases. The building of social infrastructure is lagging behind the rapid increase in population."

Speaker Judith Won Pat of the Guam Legislature also said in an interview with Asahi Shimbun and other media outlets on the evening of Feb. 10 that: "We cannot accept any more U.S. forces. Preparations to host U.S. troops have already damaged the environment seriously, and we have no intention to expropriate more land."

Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoriyhis Matsuno, Social Democratic Party (SDP) policy chief Tomoko Abe, People's New Party (PNP) policy chief Mikio Shimoji, and other members of the Okinawa base issues examination committee participated in the meeting with the governor. The SDP will propose Futenma's relocation to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's Omura base (in Omura City, Nagasaki Prefecture), while the PNP will suggest integration with Kadena Air

Base and other plans to the committee on Feb. 17.

5) SDP will not eliminate Guam as Futenma relocation option

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 12, 2010

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Members of the government and ruling parties' Okinawa base issues examination committee, which is studying alternative relocation sites for the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station, returned from their inspection tour of military bases in the U.S. territory of Guam on Feb. 11. Social Democratic Party (SDP) policy chief Tomoko Abe told reporters at Narita airport that "the SDP will not eliminate Guam as an option." People's New Party (PNP) policy chief Mikio Shimoji said, "We should take very seriously (Guam's) position that it will be difficult to accept more U.S. Marines."

6) Futenma issue also a matter of great concern to South Korea

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
February 12, 2010

Chiharu Mori, Seoul

South Korean Foreign and Trade Minister Yu Myung Hwan, in a press conference on Feb. 11, announced that his country has a strong interest in progress on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa, an outstanding issue between Japan and the United States. Yu said, "Our country is watching the matter with great concern."

The Futenma issue was not officially taken up at the Japan-ROK foreign ministerial meeting held on Feb. 11. However, Foreign Minister Yu said, "U.S. Forces Japan and U.S. Forces South Korea are playing a central role in ensuring peace and stability in Northeast Asia," adding that his country expects that Japan and the United States will settle the matter amicably.

Foreign Minister Yu's statement arises from the perception that the U.S. Marines in Okinawa are playing a crucial role in restraining North Korea.

In an operational plan compiled by the United States and South Korea, the U.S. Marines in Okinawa are positioned as reinforcements in time of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula.

7) Parliamentary Secretary of Defense Nagashima says integration with Kadena Air Base is one Futenma relocation option

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
February 12, 2010

Parliamentary Secretary of Defense Akihisa Nagashima discussed the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) during a BS Fuji TV program on the evening of Feb. 11. He said: "People living near the U.S. forces' Kadena Air Base (straddling the towns of Kadena and Chatan and Okinawa City) are troubled by the noise. If overall noise can be reduced, Futenma's integration with the Kadena base will be an option."

Regarding the plan to relocate the Futenma base to the coastal area of Camp Schwab (in Nago City) agreed between Japan and the U.S., Nagashima said: "It is necessary to find a way not to destroy the maritime environment," indicating a negative view on resolving the Futenma issue based on the Japan-U.S. agreement.

8) Futenma panel to shun finalizing relocation site

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NIKKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)
February 11, 2010

The Committee on Okinawa Base Issues, a panel made up of government and ruling coalition officials involving Social Democratic Party and People's New Party lawmakers, will present several options to the government for the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture without narrowing down the number of relocation sites to one, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said in a press conference yesterday. The panel will forgo its final coordination on the question of where to relocate Futenma airfield, thereby leaving the decision to government and ruling coalition leaders.

"We will listen to opinions (from the SDP and the PNP in the committee), and the government will consider this issue on its own and reach a conclusion," Hirano said. However, he also indicated that the government will make a final decision in a cabinet ministerial meeting on basic policies. "Once the government reaches a conclusion, a decision will be made in a cabinet ministerial meeting," Hirano said.

The cabinet ministerial meeting's regular members are Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Naoto Kan, State Minister for Postal Reform and Financial Services Shizuka Kamei (PNP president), State Minister for Consumer Affairs and Declining Birthrate Mizuho Fukushima (SDP president), and Hirano. The government, with approval obtained at a cabinet ministerial meeting, will make a cabinet decision by the end of May on where to relocate the Futenma airfield facility.

9) Okinawa prefectural assembly to adopt resolution against Futenma relocation to Henoko

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged)
February 11, 2010

The ruling and opposition parties in the Okinawa prefectural assembly began coordination yesterday to unanimously adopt a resolution and petition opposing the planned relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station from its current location in Okinawa Prefecture to a coastal area of Camp Schwab, a U.S. military base located in the Henoko area of the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago. If the resolution is adopted, Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima, who has accepted the current Futenma relocation plan, will likely be in a fix.

The Democratic Party of Japan, the Social Democratic Party, and the Japanese Communist Party, which are on the opposition bench in the prefectural assembly, held a meeting of their representatives yesterday in the prefectural assembly and concurred on passing a resolution and petition calling for the government to close down and remove Futenma airfield at an early date.

The Liberal Democratic Party, which is the largest of all the parties and groups in the prefectural assembly, used to be in favor of the current relocation plan. However, the LDP, in response to the Hatoyama administration's decision to review the current plan, has changed its policy course to call for the Futenma airfield facility to be moved out of Okinawa Prefecture or Japan. The LDP is now positive about adopting the resolution and petition.

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FOREIGN RELATIONS

10) Foreign Minister Okada: Japan's annexation of Korea injured South Korean people's ethnic pride

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Full)
February 12, 2010

Eiji Tsukiyama, Seoul

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada held talks yesterday in Seoul with his South Korean counterpart Yu Myung-hwan on such issues as the relationship of the two countries this year that marks a century since the conclusion of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty, as well

as North Korean issues. The talks took place at the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry. At a joint press conference with Yu after their talks, Okada stated on the Japan's annexation of Korea: "The people of South Korea (sic) were deprived of their country and their ethnic pride was deeply hurt." He clearly stated that Japan will build a future-oriented friendly relationship with South Korea, without forgetting the suffering of the South Korean people.

Okada said, "I am proud to be Japanese. So I understand the feelings of people who were deprived of their country." He also said, "We must not forget the feelings of the people in the country that was annexed and those who suffered due to the annexation."

In their talks, the two foreign ministers agreed to work toward entering a new phase this year. As part of their efforts to step up exchanges between the two countries in the private sector, the ministers also agreed to resume the activities of the Japan-South Korea Cultural Exchange Council comprising experts from the two countries.

Yu expressed his hope that a bill granting local-level suffrage to permanent foreign residents in Japan will be enacted. In response, Okada said, "The government is currently considering it," seeking Yu's understanding.

The South Korean government has called for the realization of a visit to Seoul by the Emperor this year, which marks a century since Japan's annexation of the Korean Peninsula. Okada, however, stated at the press conference: "We will consider it very carefully."

With regard to North Korean issues, Okada and Yu agreed in their talks on the importance of a comprehensive resolution of the nuclear and missile issues, as well as humanitarian issues, including North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals. They reaffirmed the importance of North Korea's first implementing measures to denuclearize itself, as well as close cooperation among the countries concerned including the United States, in order to resume the Six-Party Talks.

11) Document indicating that Nakasone asked U.S. to hush up Lockheed scandal discovered in U.S.

ASAHI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
February 12, 2010

A document written in February 1976, shortly after the Lockheed scandal came to light, indicating that then Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Yasuhiro Nakasone made a request of the U.S.

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government, saying, "I hope it will hush up the matter," was found in the United States. The reason was because should the names of high-ranking Japanese officials who had received kickback money be made public, "it would mean the complete defeat of the LDP at the polls, possibly leading to the breakdown of the U.S.-Japan security framework." Although then Prime Minister Takeo Miki declared he would make an effort to get to the truth of the matter, the document indicates that there was a behind-the-scenes move to bring the curtain down early on the scandal.

The document in question is a copy of a cable dated February 20, 1976, sent to the Department of State by then U.S. Ambassador to Japan James Hodgson. The document, kept at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, part of the National Archives and Records Administration, was declassified in Aug. 2008.

The Lockheed scandal was revealed to the U.S. Congress on February 4, 1976. The names of the senior Japanese officials who had received kickback money from Lockheed Corp. were not disclosed. Both the ruling and opposition camps demanded that the government find out the truth. Prime Minister Miki decided on Feb. 18 to ask the U.S. government for the provision of all materials, including the names of the high-ranking officials.

According to the document, Nakasone, making contact that night with a person connected to the U.S. Embassy, asked the person to convey

from him as LDP secretary general a message to the U.S. government. Nakasone also described Miki's policy as an "agonizing policy" and said: "If the names of the high-ranking officials are disclosed now, it will throw Japanese politics into turmoil. It is best to delay the announcement to the extent possible."

12) "Trust me" not good enough to maintain alliance: GSDF official

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
February 11, 2010

A Ground Self-Defense Force official gave a directive in a ceremony held yesterday at the GSDF's Ojojigahara range in Miyagi Prefecture to start joint training exercises there with U.S. Army troops, in which he indicated that language alone is insufficient to maintain an alliance.

"An alliance cannot be maintained by diplomacy or political rhetoric, nor can it be maintained by only saying "trust me," said GSDF Col. Takeshi Nakazawa, commander of the GSDF 6th Division 44th Infantry Regiment, which is garrisoned in the city of Fukushima.

Last November, when Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and U.S. President Obama met, Hatoyama said "trust me" when referring to the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station from its current location in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture. As it stands, the remark made by a GSDF officer could create a stir.

Nakazawa commented through a GSDF spokesman: "I wasn't quoting or criticizing the prime minister, who is the commander in chief of the Self-Defense Forces."

POLITICS

13) Ishikawa tenders resignation to DPJ

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YOMIURI (Page 1) (Abridged)
February 12, 2010

Tomohiro Ishikawa, a Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) House of Representatives member (elected in the Hokkaido No. 11 electoral district), yesterday tendered his resignation from the party to Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa through a proxy to take responsibility for his indictment for violating the Political Funds Control Law in connection with a land purchase by Ozawa's fund management body, Rikuzankai. The DPJ will formally approve his resignation on Feb. 15 at a meeting of its Standing Officers Council.

Yesterday Ozawa indicated to reporters that the DPJ will not issue any penalty to Ishikawa.

ECONOMY

14) Transport minister asks for cool-headed response at meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Japan

ASAHI (Page 10) (Full)
February 11, 2010

In connection with large-scale Toyota recalls (free of charge), Transport Minister Seiji Maehara on Feb. 10 met with U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos at the transport ministry. During the meeting, Maehara called on the U.S. government to respond in a cool-headed manner, noting, "A matter like this should not pose an impediment on the open markets of the two countries."

In view of the growing criticism of Toyota Motors in the U.S. Congress having an impact on the company's new car sales, Maehara proposed holding a meeting with the aim of allaying the situation. According to the transport ministry, Roos replied, "There may be harsh views in the U.S., but Toyota will continue to be a company with high name value if it fulfills its responsibilities."

Emerging from the meeting, Roos told the press corps: "This is the matter of safety. It will not affect the strength of Japan-U.S. relations either directly or indirectly." He thus indicated his view that the matter will not become a pending diplomatic issue.

The issue of Toyota's recalls is making headlines in the U.S. The U.S. Congress is also moving into full gear in its moves to pursue Toyota. The company's new car sales in January dropped sharply. In addition, Toyota has recalled its flagship model Prius as well. Toyota is now in a situation of being unable to avoid damage to its sales. Referring to Toyota Motors President Akio Toyoda, who will visit the U.S. shortly, Maehara during the meeting said, "I believe he will explain the situation to the U.S. Congress and Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood."

15) Toyota president to meet with Secretary LaHood

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Abridged)
February 11, 2010

It was disclosed that Toyota President Akio Toyoda, who will visit the U.S. on account of a series of recalls of defective vehicles, will meet with U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood. Toyoda had been

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scheduled to visit the U.S. on the 10th, but his flight was cancelled owing to the blizzard that struck the Washington D.C. area. He is presently readjusting his schedule.

16) Toyota recall: It may be difficult to allay the situation, even if the president visits the U.S.

YOMIURI (Page 11) (Full)
February 12, 2010

It has been decided that Toyota Motors President Akio Toyoda will visit the U.S. and announce his determination to ensure thorough information disclosure. However, the U.S. criticism of Toyoda as having been late in responding to the recalls of a massive number of Toyota cars is strong. Many take the view that it would be difficult to allay the situation even if he visits the U.S.

Akihiro Okada, Washington, Taro Koyano, New York

Toyoda will likely meet with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and heavyweights in the U.S. Congress, and offer an apology for the confusion. He will also seek understanding for his company's measures to deal with the issue.

However, Congressman Darrell Issa (Republican), a prominent member of the U.S. House of Representatives, released a statement on Feb. 10 that read, "If Toyota's President visits the U.S. and Toyota dealerships, we would like to invite him to attend a public hearing and a congressional meeting." He thus asked Toyoda to attend a public hearing hosted by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Toyota Motors indicated a negative stance on the idea of President Toyoda attending the public hearing, noting that for now, President Yoshimi Inaba of Toyota North America is the one who has been invited to the public hearing. The judgment is that the president will be put in a very difficult situation if he is pushed into a corner at a public hearing, where he is expected to face harsh questioning.

However, a Toyota executive said that the president is eager to attend the public hearing. Much attention is being focused on what Toyoda decides to do.

17) National debt totals 871 trillion yen, or 6.83 million yen per capita

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Abridged)
February 11, 2010

The outstanding balance of Japan's central government debts - government bonds and loans payable - totaled a record high of 871.5104 trillion yen at the end of 2009, the Finance Ministry said on Feb. 10. The figure is an increase of 24.8199 trillion yen from the end of 2008. The total translates into roughly 6.83 million yen per capita. If the financial condition continues to deteriorate, pressure is likely to be applied for an increase in long-term interest rates.

The Finance Ministry projects that the national debt will swell to 900 trillion yen at the end of fiscal 2009 and to 973 trillion yen at the end of fiscal 2010.

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The increase in the balance was largely attributable to the additional issuance of government bonds to shore up the economy under the previous administration of Prime Minister Taro Aso.

Standard & Poor's, a U.S. rating agency, lowered the outlook on Japanese government bonds from stable to negative in January. The Japanese government plans to come up with a mid-term target by June for restoring fiscal health. Whether it will be able to come up with a convincing target remains to be seen.

SPACE

18) Discontinuation of manned space exploration program by U.S.:
"Its impact will be limited," says JAXA president

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)
February 11, 2010

Referring to the discontinuation of a manned space exploration program by the U.S., Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency President Keiji Tachikawa at a press conference indicated his view, noting, "Its impact on Japan will not be so great." On Feb. 1, President Obama announced the discontinuation of a manned space exploration program called the "Constellation Program" due to severe fiscal conditions and the trend of public opinion.

This was the first press conference held by the JAXA president since the U.S. decided to halt the program. Tachikawa noted: "The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) may cease to take the lead in manned space exploration. Our challenge lies in what form Japan should take in declaring its participation in the development of manned space exploration."

ROOS